

# CONSERVATION UPDATE

## 2008



State Senator

**Roger Kahn, M.D.**

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*Dear Neighbor:*

*Michigan is blessed with an abundance of natural resources – land and water that provide us with an enviable quality of life. Preserving those resources is essential if we want our children and grandchildren to be able to enjoy the natural Michigan we have today.*

*My Senate colleagues and I recently launched an ambitious plan, called the Green Michigan Initiative, to promote the wise use and conservation of our state's resources. The plan focuses on protecting our Great Lakes and inland waters, expanding recycling, developing green energy alternatives, and reducing waste in our state landfills. I am pleased to update you on those efforts as well as other important conservation issues.*

*As warm weather sets in, I hope you and your family enjoy the beauty and wonder of natural Michigan - whether it's on the shores of our Great Lakes, at a neighborhood park or in your own backyard!*

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Kahn".

**Roger Kahn, M.D.**

**State Senator**

**32<sup>nd</sup> District**





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## Michigan CONSERVATION Week

Michigan Conservation Week celebrates our state's natural heritage and the role we have in conserving our natural resources.

The 2008 event, held April 20 through 26, focused on land preservation. Michigan is facing the loss of farmland and shrinking areas of forest, shoreline and open space. The week-long celebration honored local and state efforts to protect land with natural, agricultural, or recreational value in our communities.

As part of Conservation Week, legislation to encourage private conservation donations through tax incentives for individuals and businesses was announced, as well as a proposal to allow the Natural Resources Trust Fund to spend more of its money on the acquisition and recreational development of special public land.

I was pleased to kick-off Conservation Week at a family homestead here in the 32nd District. The



*Sen. Roger Kahn discusses land conservation with property owner Ken Wenzlick and Greg Eagle of the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy.*

Wenzlick family donated an easement on the family farm to the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy so its beauty and history could be enjoyed for generations to come.

Michigan's non-profit land conservancies have helped protect more than 400,000 acres of shoreline, forests, unique agricultural land, and other special areas.

## GREEN MICHIGAN — Water Protection —

As the Great Lakes state, our magnificent water resources provide environmental and economic value, as well as recreational opportunities second to none. I am pleased to co-sponsor legislation that will protect our waters for generations to come.

Along with helping preserve Michigan's waters and environment, the legislation ensures that our farmers, businesses and others that rely on access to water are still able to use it.

The key bill, SB 860, would adopt a water withdrawal assessment process developed by a team of experts and based on sound science. Along with site analysis,

the assessment process uses a computer tool to determine if a proposed withdrawal would adversely impact state water levels or other natural resources, such as fish populations.

A separate bill, SB 212, will adopt the Great Lakes Basin Compact. The Compact, signed by all Great Lakes Governors and Premiers, will better protect Great Lakes waters from outside diversion. You can follow its progress, and Senate Bills 858-860, 723 and 727 at [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov).

I will continue to work with my Senate colleagues to do all we can to protect our priceless water resources.



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## GREEN MICHIGAN — Renewable Energy —

Michigan stands to become a leader in wind, biomass, solar, hydroelectric and new energy resources. Area businesses like Hemlock Semiconductor and projects like the Alma Energy Park promise to bring jobs to the area and position mid-Michigan as a leading region for emerging technologies. I supported Senate legislation that provides an important foothold in the state for the renewable energy industry and an incentive for households to go green.

SB 1000 requires state government to lead the way rather than place the financial burden on Michigan consumers. Under the legislation, the state must purchase 3 percent of its energy from renewable

sources by January 1, 2009, 10 percent by 2010, 20 percent by 2020, and 25 percent by 2025. These aggressive purchasing requirements would be set aside if the cost of green energy is more than 5 percent higher than traditional power.

SB 1040, which I sponsored, encourages consumers to buy green energy by providing an income tax credit up to \$200 a year to offset the higher cost of renewable power, while SB 1041 requires electricity suppliers to inform consumers of this option on their billing statements.

The legislation passed the Senate unanimously and awaits action in the House.

## Stopping a dangerous pest

It's been six years since the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was discovered in Michigan. This damaging pest infests ash trees, leading to their early destruction.

An estimated 25 million ash trees have been lost. The economic cost to homeowners and the timber industry has been staggering, not to mention the environmental and aesthetic loss of these beautiful, stately trees in our neighborhoods and communities.

There is now good news to report in efforts to control this pest. Just this spring, the Michigan Department of Agriculture gave approval to what looks to be an effective pesticide.

Despite this promising breakthrough, it's important to remember that EAB can travel hundreds of miles through the movement of infested firewood. That's why people should leave the hardwood at home and buy firewood locally when camping.

For more information on the Emerald Ash Borer, visit [www.michigan.gov/eab](http://www.michigan.gov/eab).



## Senator Kahn supports commercial composting rules

You may have heard composted material referred to as "garden gold." That's because compost improves soil structure, supports root growth, and holds in moisture and nutrients – and it's all from yard waste!

Many homeowners, municipalities and businesses recycle yard clippings through composting. Unfortunately, a few large-scale operations have given composting a bad name in some areas of the state.

A new law targets the fraudulent operators that collect yard clippings for a fee and then let the waste rot and decompose, rather than composting it properly. These sites can pose contamination and nuisance problems. Public Act 212 of 2007 (Senate Bill 513) sets up rules for commercial composting, including state oversight.

The law does not affect the average homeowner. Backyard composting is a great way to dispose of yard clippings and other garden debris. Click here for tips on home composting from the Department of Environmental Quality. [www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-wmd-swp-homecomposting.pdf](http://www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-wmd-swp-homecomposting.pdf)





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## GREEN MICHIGAN — Recycling and Reducing Waste —

Although it takes a little effort, recycling provides great benefits by helping conserve our natural resources, reducing energy consumption and freeing up landfill space. Unfortunately, recycling rates lag in Michigan. A recent study pegs Michigan's recycling rate at 20 percent, far below the average of 30 percent among other Great Lakes states.

As part of our Green Michigan plan, we've set a goal to increase statewide recycling. Senate Republicans have introduced bills to establish a Recycling Advisory Council and a statewide recycling program. Another key bill would ban consumer computer electronics from landfills.

Please visit [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov) for more information on Senate Bills 889-906. Also, be sure to check out your local recycling options at [www.michigan.gov/deqreswastecontacts](http://www.michigan.gov/deqreswastecontacts).



### Michigan Toll-Free Numbers:

[Emerald Ash Borer Information](#) .....866-325-0023  
[Environmental Assistance Center](#) .....800-662-9278  
[Pollution Emergency Alert](#) .....800-292-4706  
[Radon Information](#) .....800-723-6642  
[Report All Poaching \(RAP\)](#) .....800-292-7800  
[Report Littering](#) .....800-44-TRASH



### Access *Michigan Recycles!* *Coloring and Activity Book*

Click on the book to learn about recycling with your young child.

### Senator Kahn announces local grants



While every corner of our state seems to be a special place, there's no place like home! I am pleased to share news of recent grant awards and recommendations that will help preserve the natural resources and quality of life here in the 32nd Senate District.

- **City of Saginaw, Andersen Park Development** - recommended Natural Resources Trust Fund Development Grant - \$51,800
- **City of Alma** - Arbor Day Mini-Grant Award - \$200
- **Gratiot County Parks and Recreation Commission** - Arbor Day Mini-Grant Award - \$200
- **Richland Township** - Arbor Day Mini-Grant Award - \$200